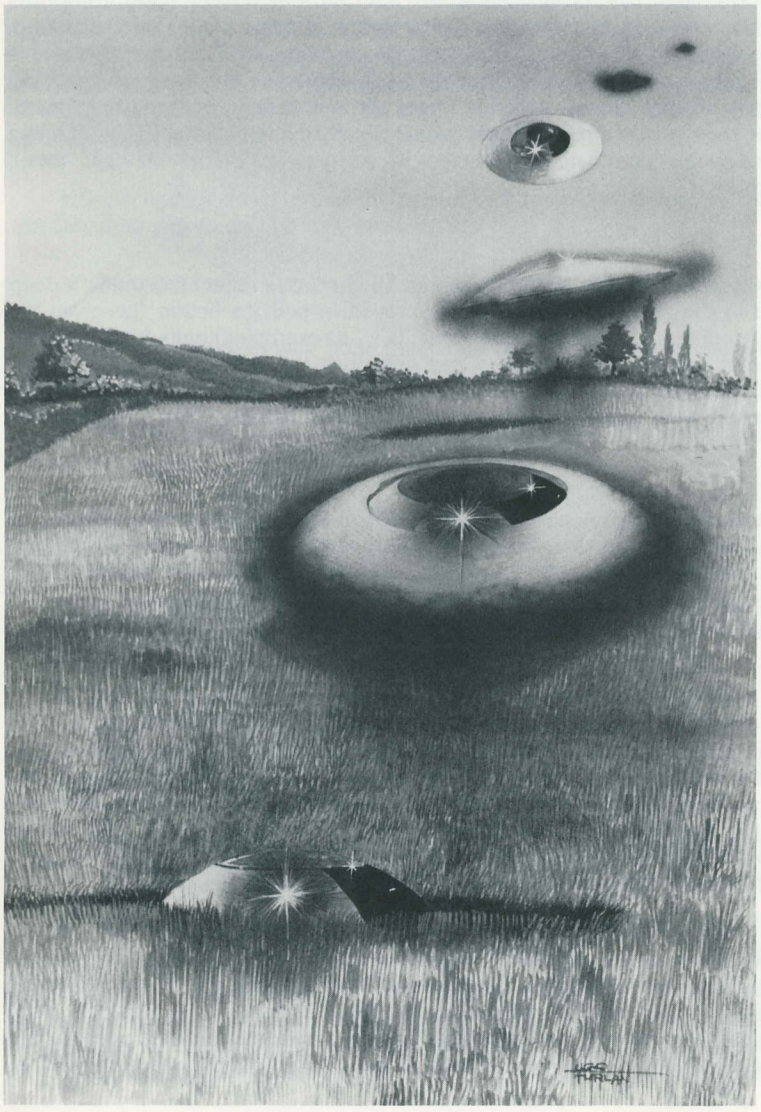
INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1984
Vol. 9, No. 6
ISSN. #0730-174X



CLOSE ENCOUNTER AT VARZI

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL:
DID "DISCOVER" DISCOVER?

ITALIAN REPORT
Roberto Pinotti

CLOSE ENCOUNTER AT VARZI
Antonio Chiumiento

THE CARGANO PENINSULA CIGAR
Roberto Pinotti

MATTOON GASSER: A MODERN MYTH
Willy Smith

ALASKA CLOSE ENCOUNTER
Richard Sigismond

MYSTERY AT RENDLESHAM
Jenny Randles

BOOK REVIEWS:
MUTE EVIDENCE
Mark Chesney
INVESTIGATION OVNI
Willy Smith

MORE "GASSERS"
Jerome Clark

An
ASSOCIATE Publication
of the
CENTER FOR UFO STUDIES

Russell Croop

Editor-in-Chief
J. Allen Hynek
Consulting Editor
Richard Hall
Contributing Editors
Bill Chalker
Jerome Clark
Robert Gribble
Roberto Pinotti
Dr. Willy Smith
Bob Pratt
Mark Rodeghier
Dr. Kenneth Schellhase
Richard Sigismond
Production Manager
John P. Timmerman
Make-up Editor
Ann E. Parker
Artists
Caroline Baum
Edith Bonhivert

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER (ISSN. # 0730-174X) is published bimonthly by the CENTER FOR UFO STUDIES, P.O. Box 1402, Evanston, Illinois 60204. All rights reserved. Reproduction without permission is strictly prohibited. ©Copyright 1984 by Center for UFO Studies, Third Class postage paid at Lima, Ohio.

Address all editorial correspondence to INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER, P.O. Box 1402, Evanston, Illinois 60204, USA.

Address all subscription correspondence to INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER, P.O. Box 1621, Lima, Ohio 45802. (419) 223-2531.

The INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER is a benefit publication mailed to ASSOCIATES of the Center for UFO Studies contributing $20.00 or more to the Center for UFO Studies. Foreign ASSOCIATES add $5.00 for surface or $10.00 for airmail delivery. All amounts in U.S. funds. Other publications also available to contributors of larger amounts. For details, write to P.O. Box 1621, Lima, Ohio 45802, USA. POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to CUFOS, P.O. Box 1621, Lima, Ohio 45802.

EDITORIAL

Did "Discover" Discover?

by Allen Hynek

At the grocery the other morning, my eye was caught by the large block letters on a magazine cover spelling out "UFO MYSTERY," superimposed over a lurid drawing of what seemed to be two police officers staring upward as a circle of multicolored lights passed over their squad car. This bit of cheap sensationalism wasn't being used to push that week's issue of one of the tabloids generally found at the check-out counter, but to sell the November issue of TIME, Inc.'s magazine DISCOVER. This magazine immodestly styles itself the newsmagazine of science, but in this case it was well over a year late in bringing its public the news of the "Boomerang" sightings which started in March, 1983, the subject of its present article.

The article itself served to allow the magazine's editorial staff to take frequent snide jabs at the UFO investigators involved, jabs which were not supported by the meager and sloppy evidence presented. The "proof" offered by DISCOVER as science news, comprises a number of quotes from *unnamed* sources, a photograph of some planes on the ground, and a shot of an airport diner menu containing the selection "UFO Burger." Does this qualify as proof? I hardly think so. It is, however, sadly typical of the heavy-on-graphics, low-on-content style of what passes as fact in many of the popular newsstand magazines. In a sidebar to the main article a psychologist criticizes people interested in UFOs as being well-educated individuals completely immersed in science (!), or, as he calls them, 'scientists run amuck.'

In the same sidebar, a sociologist claims that UFO reports reflect the public's deep desire to believe in the friendly space aliens portrayed in science fiction (he gives the movies "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "E.T." as examples) quite forgetting that the major theme in science fiction movies has been just the opposite; hostile conflict between the earth and aliens has been the rule from H. G. Wells and Buck Rogers on. The two movies he quotes were notable exceptions to the "Body Snatchers from Outer Space" theme.

Despite the shockingly bad quality of the DISCOVER article, it *is* true that some pilots have been fooling around in the skies over Westchester and Putnam counties, in southern New York state, the scene of the UFO sightings. Indeed, this has been known to our readers for some time and is nothing new. The problem is: can it be established that *all* of the UFO sightings are due to slap-happy pilots?

An article about these sightings, several cuts above that in DISCOVER, appeared in a recent APRO Bulletin (Vol. 32, No. 6). In it, Dick Ruhl and his co-authors recount their investigations into these sightings. They provide some of the evidence lacking in the DISCOVER article. They spoke with a number of witnesses, some of whom, however, hardly support the plane theory. One spoke of "one huge solid object" and others remarked on its slow motion as well. Others, however, described what definitely does seem ascribable to light aircraft flying in formation, and therein lies our dilemma.

During their investigations, the APRO investigators ran into the same rumors our team in that area had encountered fully a year earlier. They too had staked out Stormville airport and observed suspicious light planes landing. The APRO investigators had a more direct experience: one night they saw a brilliant wedge-shaped object that upon closer inspection was resolved into six light aircraft, and so they staked out the nearby Stormville

airport. While there they report that they saw something fitting the description of the UFO, hovering in the distance. It approached silently until it was overhead, when a slight droning sound was heard. When it came close to them they could discern that it was actually six Cessnas, which then broke formation and began to land.

They succeeded in obtaining a photograph of the lead plane, showing its registration number, which allowed them to trace its owner, which is something that DISCOVER did not discover, and published it.

Impressed by their investigations, the APRO investigators concluded that there is only a 10 percent chance that a genuine UFO was involved in the sightings, despite witnesses who feel otherwise.

The horns of the dilemma are: on one hand we have a group of flying "irresponsibles" getting their jollies from scaring those on the ground, causing near accidents on the roads beneath them; on the other, we have witnesses who describe large, silent, hovering, solid objects — in some cases so close, huge, and unusual that a group of light planes flying in formation seems a ludicrous and impossible explanation.

Finally, if one has read "EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY" by Elizabeth Loftus, one is made aware that no witness, technically trained or not, can be regarded as infallible. This, of course, applies equally well to those who reported something very strange and to those who saw what they took to be light planes.

It finally comes down to this: the mystery will remain until one or (preferably) more of the following points can be fully established:

1. The UFOs were seen 'before' the pilots began their formation flights.

2. Several witnesses saw 'both' the planes and the UFO, preferably at about the same time, and could clearly distinguish between the two.

3. The UFO was seen to hover 'directly overhead' for a significant time, preferably a minute or longer.

4. The UFO was seen on evenings when it was definitely established that the planes were not in the air.

5. The speed of the UFO, when flying with or across the wind, was definitely 'below' stall speed for light aircraft.

6. The identical sightings were made in other parts of the country.

7. The planes were in one part of the New York area while the UFO was being reported in another part.

8. On the night of the stakeout at Stormville airport, when the planes were actually seen to land, no responsible people 'saw' the UFO.

9. The flight path of the UFO did 'not' match that of the planes.

It would be costly in time, effort, and expense to establish these points, but unless they can be established, the prosaic explanation of light planes flying in formation as the cause of 'all' the pertinent UFO reports cannot be discarded. CUFOS intends to carry on with this perplexing investigation and, of course, will welcome help and cooperation from others. □

Italian Report

by Roberto Pinotti

Ed Note: Mr. Pinotti is our correspondent and contributing editor from Italy. Here he summarizes briefly for us the public and political impact of the recent Ufological Congress held in Genoa, Italy (May 4-5, 1984) and page 6 gives us an account of a cigar-shaped UFO seen over the Gargano Peninsula on the Adriatic in 1966 (but whose investigation was not made public until after the death of the principle witness) and compares this sighting to similar ones of historic interest.

CUN's Ufology National Congress in Genoa was the third such Congress in our organization's history. The first was held near Rimini, on the north Adriatic coast, in 1967, and the second at Toscolano Maderno (Garda Lake) in 1977.

The theme of the Genoa Congress was "UFOS AND MASS MEDIA; THE NEED FOR CORRECT INFORMATION," and its thrust was to get the national press, radio and TV involved in the subject of UFOs as never before. It cost about $7,000 to mount, two thirds of this amount being paid by local firms, banks and public authorities. [Ed note: Imagine this being done in the U.S.!]

We were very pleased with the results: 50 articles in the national press, 11 radio and TV interviews on the national networks (RAI and TELEMONTECARLO). A direct result of this was a well-prepared political action by Congressmen Abete, Fiori, and Scaiola of the Christian Socialist Party, who in Parliament asked (mentioning CUN and the Congress) two questions of Premier Craxi and Defense Minister Spadolini. Their common answer was that Mr. Craxi is considering an opportunity to initiate a civilian scientific study project on UFOs, to be developed by Italy's National Research Council.

Quite apart from this possible development, the Genoa Congress had a unique feature: for the first time in Italy an astronomer (Prof. Vincenso Croce, of the Monte Mario Observatory in Rome), a meteorolo-

(continued on page 16)

Close Encounter at Varzi

Ed. Note: The following account of an Italian sighting comes to us from Antonio Chiumiento, who worked with three other investigators of the C.U.N. (Centro Ufologia Nazionale). They were able to carry out an on-site investigation only six days after the event, greatly decreasing the chances of distorted witness memories. As with every foreign case published in IUR, we must offer the disclaimer that, while we have the highest confidence in Mr. Chiumiento and his associates, we cannot confirm the details of the event as we generally can with a U.S. report. Nevertheless, the many features of this case which match those from other nations—the vapor, animal reaction, noiseless operation, and rotating dome—do place it firmly within the by now well-established pattern of UFO characteristics and behavior.

TYPE: CE-I (or DD)
DATE: June 5, 1983
TIME: about 5 a.m. CET
DURATION: over one hour
WITNESSES: 3
PLACE: Varzi, Pavia, Italy

by Antonio Chiumiento

The persistent, angry and prolonged barking of neighborhood dogs woke up Mario Claretto, 56, retired restaurant manager, at about 5 a.m. on a Sunday morning. Since he needed to prepare some food that morning, he decided to get out of bed and see why the dogs were barking. As he looked outside he saw, on a hill across the road from his house, a shining object with an orange "headlight" or "lamp." The object was hovering just over the tall alfalfa in a field across the road from his home. Claretto also noticed that the upper portion or dome of the object was slowly turning, showing consecutively a silver-bright section like tinfoil, a dark section, and then the orange light.

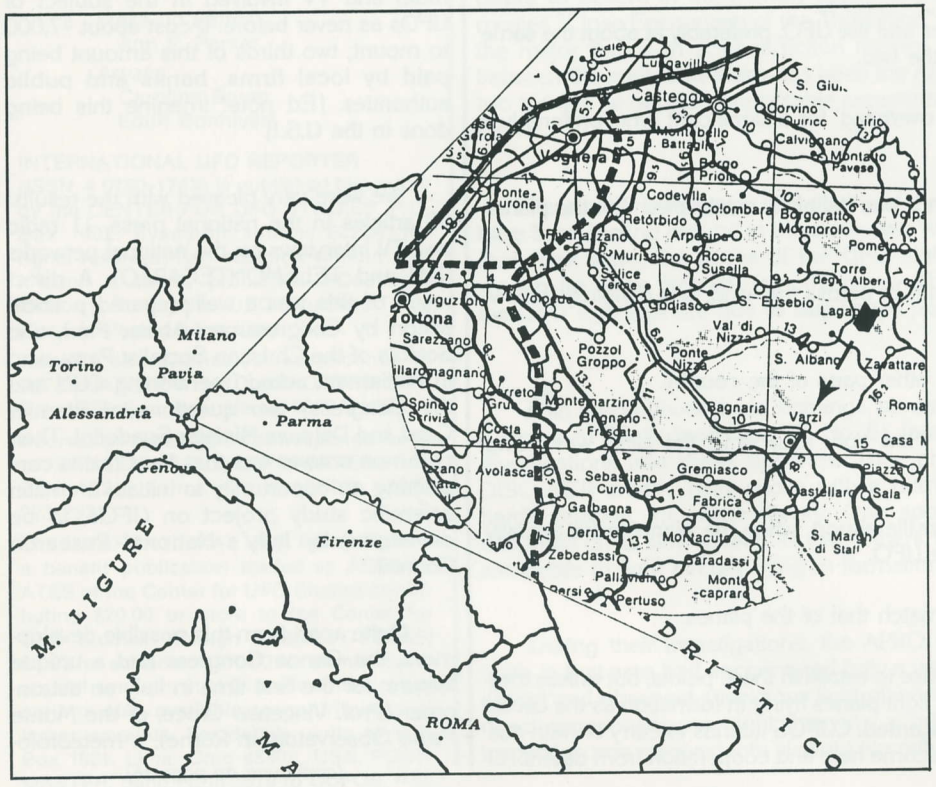
Claretto woke up his wife, Velia Bono, so that she also might see "a spectacular and extraordinary thing." She was not impressed, however, exclaiming that "probably the sun is the cause of all this" and returned to her bed.

While still intrigued by the object, Claretto did not go into the field for a closer observation. He suffers from a serious heart disease, and climbing a hill in the early morning would be a dangerous risk. Additionally, he still had to prepare the food for the day's guests. Compromising as best he could, he worked in his kitchen for the next few minutes, keeping his eye on the object from time to time.

When he finished his work, he resolved to have a closer look. As he entered his courtyard, ready to set out, he observed someone walking toward the object. The fellow approached quite near the object and then disappeared from view, due to the rather high alfalfa. Suddenly, Claretto saw him reappear, running like a madman, escaping down the road (Ed Note: continued inquiries by the investigators have failed to locate this individual).

For some reason it was only at this juncture that the idea that the object was a "flying object" crossed Claretto's mind. He told us later that he thought, "I bet it's now going to rise," and indeed, it did. As the "engine" (the term that Claretto used to describe the phenomenon) rose, he was able to observe its finer details (Ed Note: our cover illustration is based upon Claretto's description of the UFO as it rose). The object was flat, but had the form of a slightly overturned dish with a silver or tinfoil-colored top. The object did not rise vertically, but skimmed the grass at one or two meters in height for some distance. As it moved, the dome in its center receded, and a vapor or fog was emitted. Claretto had great difficulty in describing this fog, which looked to him like "something between smoke and dust" and had a brown or brick color.

As the vapor covered the object, its features became indistinct and, curiously, the phenomenon assumed the shape, and even the color, of a Havana cigar (Ed Note: this description is especially intriguing, given the many cigar-shaped UFOs that were reported in the 1950s). The grass was seemingly unaffected as the object moved above it. After a few more moments, the "engine" rose vertically to a height of 20 to 30 meters, hovered for a few seconds, and became clearly visible as the vapor dissipated. At this point the dome was extended again, rotating as before and exhibiting the orange-colored light. Then with no warning, the object departed in a south-southwest direction, increasing its apparent speed as



it sped away. Claretto said that, in the distance, it had the appearance of a "pear without a stalk" and was dull brown in color. Eventually, it was lost to view in the clear blue sky.

This interesting sighting received further confirmation from Bruno Stafforini, a farmer who lives near the Claretto family. He, too, heard the dogs barking at 5 a.m. and went to investigate. Stafforini described the dogs' behavior as highly agitated, one animal almost tearing free from its chain, the other running toward the field where the object was, barking furiously, and then returning to the farmer's feet. This behavior was particularly puzzling since at no time did either witness hear any noise from the object, and, at the beginning of the sighting, the object was barely visible over the tall alfalfa. In fact, Stafforini did not see the object until Claretto pointed it out to him, though his initial impression was that it was "only some tinfoil which glittered."

When the object rose into the air, Claretto again called out to Stafforini, who watched it from his courtyard. Stafforini described it as looking like an apple, presenting as it rotated the colors of silver, red, and black. He added the important detail that the dogs remained restless until the object had moved away from the hill.

Neither witness was able to make an accurate estimate of the object's size, though each placed its maximum dimension at no more than five meters. If Claretto's son-in-law can be believed, there is partial confirmation of these estimates. The son-in-law (Mr. G.C., who does not want his full name published) was staying at the Claretto's that weekend with his wife. When he arose at about 8:30 a.m. and was informed of the sighting, he immediately went to the field to look for traces of the object's presence. He says that he found a circular area about 2-3 meters in diameter in which the alfalfa was bent but not flattened. The circle was about ten meters from a nearby road, in exactly the spot that the witnesses indicated the object had landed (this position is about 160 meters from the Claretto home).

The alleged ground trace could not be verified by our investigators because, the day after the sighting, the farmer Tornari, who owned the field, cut down the alfalfa.

(continued on page 13)

The arrow points to the location of the shining object which Mario Claretto saw hovering over a field of alfalfa across the road from his home in Varzi, Italy.

Mario Claretto, r., talks with the investigator.

The Cargano Peninsula Cigar

by Roberto Pinotti, CUN (Centro Ufologico Nazionale)

In early September, 1966, on the coast of the Gargano Peninsula in southern Italy, a photograph was taken, in color, near sunset, of two luminous objects. One was spherical and under high magnification resembled the well-known Saturn-ringed object photographed by Barauna near the island of Trindade, Brazil. The other was of the classical cigar-shaped variety. Both were traveling across the sky, with the latter trailing the smaller spherical object.

The man who took the photo was a bank official of Bolgona whose name, we know now, was Gerardo Bagnulo. The CUN president at the time, Mario Maioli, in 1969 learned of this strange photo by mere chance through a common friend. During the previous three years Bagnulo had kept the photo, and particularly his name, secret. He wished to avoid the attentions of the mass media and of curiosity seekers. He was persuaded by Mr. Maioli, however, to submit the photograph to CUN for study, along with a signed statement as to the nature of the event, with the understanding that his name would not be divulged until after his death. He just didn't want his privacy disturbed, and CUN kept its promise.

Mr. Bagnulo has since died and the circumstances of the event can now be made public. Mr. Bagnulo was on a pleasure outing with members of his family when he saw the two objects moving through the sky. By luck he had his camera in hand and managed to get one shot before the objects disappeared from sight near the northwest horizon.

Commenting on his experience, Mr. Bagnulo said, "I am not in a position to express my opinion, since I have never occupied myself with such objects, my interest lying in other directions. All the same, the experience certainly made a profound impression upon me, inasmuch as any question of any sort of optical illusion is most categorically ruled out."

The original negative, however, was subjected to examination. It had been taken with a Zeiss Symbolica camera, a Tessar :2.8 lens, using AGFA color slide film. The photograph shown here was developed through an internegative directly from the original color slide. Through discreet and thorough enquiries, CUN found no evidence of any kind that might tend to cast doubt on the geniuneness of the photograph.

This is an enlargement of the two objects photographed by Gerardo Bagnulo in September, 1966, along the coast of southern Italy.

That being so, it is of interest to compare the Bagnulo sighting to three others in some detail:

As reported by Aime Michel, on Oct. 17, 1952, M. Yves Prigent and his family observed a large tubular object sending forth a swarm of metallic globes which traveled in pairs. This event in Oloron and its replica at Gaillac (Tarn) 10 days later was witnessed by hundreds of people in broad daylight and were investigated by French military authorities and their intelligence services in particular. In both cases, the two "cloud cigars" (as Aime Michel later defined them) spewed down a quantity of the mysterious substance known popularly as "angel hair."

Two years later, on Oct. 27, 1954, Mr. Lucchetti and Mr. Lastrucci were standing on the terrace of a hotel on the Piazza San Marco at Prato, when they noticed in the sky, two "cigars" or luminous "spindles," followed by a vivid white trail. Both objects were moving at a staggering speed, with a short distance between them. Then the rear object accelerated and drew level with the lead object. Now both objects did a 45 degree turn and vanished toward Florence.

A few minutes later there was a dramatic interruption of a football game between teams from Florence and Pistoia. First the 10,000 spectators, then the players, and finally the referee himself, stood with their gaze riveted on two mysterious spherical objects passing over the stadium. Between 2:20 and 2:29 p.m., pairs of flying objects of this kind passed over Florence three times. Strange hairy filaments rained down upon the city, and the newspaper offices were inundated with excited phone calls. As we recall, at both Oloron and Gaillac, witnesses had been unable to make an analysis of the enigmatic strands of "angel hair" before they dissolved. At Florence, however, an engineering student had the presence of mind to clap some of the fibre into a sterilized glass tube and hasten with it to the director of the Institute of Chemical Analysis in the University of Florence. A rapid microscopic and spectroscopic analysis was made; the latter indicated the presence of boron, silicon, calcium and magnesium. These are the primary components of "boron-silicon glass."

It is the opinion of CUN that considered in conjunction with the French and Italian sightings described above, the Bagnulo sighting at Gargano takes on a greater significance, even though no "angel hair" was observed in the latter. Perhaps it may have fallen into the sea had there been any.

[Ed Note: Once again, apparently lack of funds and personnel prevented the detailed and in-depth investigation these "cloud cigars" and their emanations so desperately need to be of true scientific value. Still, we must do the best we can, as CUN has, despite limitations of funds, time, and personnel.] □

Mattoon Gasser: A Modern Myth

by Willy Smith

It is truly remarkable how the episode of the "Phantom Anesthetist"—who in 1944 allegedly attacked citizens of Mattoon, Illinois, with a mysterious gas—has become a staple of contemporary ufological (and other) literature, invariably cited as a classic example of mass hysteria. Furthermore, it has been used to support opposite contentions. For example, one writer emphasizes the differences between the onset of UFO waves and the start of mass hysteria flaps.[1] Another quotes it to stress the thesis that cattle mutilations have a naturalistic explanation,[2] namely, the hysteria of the farmers, rather than a bizarre explanation due to UFOs or other preposterous circumstances (Ed. Note: see the book review in this issue of *IUR* regarding *Mute Evidence* for an explanation of these mutilations). Recently, in a series of papers appearing in the *MUFON UFO Journal*, the Mattoon incident is cited and used to maintain that "mass hysteria probably has nothing to do with UFO reports."[3]

I wonder how many of those who so freely speak of the "anesthetist of Mattoon" to prove one point or another have really gone to the original literature to inform themselves of the particulars of this event. Not to be like them, I secured with some effort, a copy of Donald M. Johnson's initial paper,[4] and my investment paid off.

Before going into the nitty gritty, I wish to point out that from the very beginning, Johnson, whom I suspect of being just a student at the time, apparently intended to "prove" a case of mass hysteria, regardless of the evidence that he himself had found in Mattoon. This is the impression that assaults the reader from the very first line when, for instance, it is indicated that "the story begins on the first night of September, 1944, when a woman reported to the police that someone...had sprayed her..." These remarks are not correct; the story did not start on Sept. 1, and she did not report it to the police but to a friend and to her husband, who called the police.

Now to the details, all provided by Johnson. According to him, and after a careful reading of his paper, the true chronology of both the reports and newspaper coverage is as follows:

Date	Name of Witnesses	Report or Coverage
Aug. 31	Mr. & Mrs. B	Not reported to the police until Sept. 3. Not published in newspaper until Sept. 5.
Aug. 31	Mrs. C	Not reported until later; not made public until Sept. 5.
Sept. 1	Mrs. A. & her daughter	About midnight asked a friend to call the police. Husband, two hours later, saw a man run from window and called the police again.
Sept. 2	———————	Incident of Mrs. A and daughter appeared in newspaper.
Sept. 3	———————	No paper. (Sunday)
Sept. 4	———————	No paper. (Labor Day)
Sept. 5	———————	The cases of Mr. & Mrs. B and Mrs. C appeared in newspaper.
	Mr. & Mrs. B	New case reported to police.
	Mrs. E	New case reported to police by her husband.
Sept. 6	———————	Three more cases.
Sept. 7	———————	No cases.
Sept. 8	———————	Four cases.
Sept. 9	———————	Five cases.
Sept. 10	———————	Seven cases.
Sept. 11	———————	No cases.
Sept. 12	———————	Final case.

A grand total, then, of 25 cases in 13 days. However, the weight of all these cases is not the same. The case of Mr. and Mrs. B, for instance, occurring before the key case which supposedly triggered the total sequence, cannot be attributed to hysteria, since Mr. B was the one to feel sick and smelled the gas. This was *not* hysteria but a real event. As for Mrs. C, she was with her daughter, so it would seem a case of *folie a deux* but without a stimulus, because again this was prior to any publicity. It seems more rational to accept that this was also a real incident. Johnson's key case, Mrs. A and her daughter, is an episode with two witnesses, and moreover, Mr. A, coming home much later and ignorant of previous events, sees a man run from the window. Hysteria, or plain fact? I think there is no doubt, unless we postulate that Mr. A had obscure motives to gain public attention: a prowler was prowling and scared Mrs. A and her daughter. Thus the sequence, if imaginary, was triggered by a real incident.

In the absence of more details, we can make no judgments on the other cases. But we have made progress, as we have easily explained the initial incidents. Perhaps the others were prompted by the sensationalist handling by the media, particularly the local paper, the *Mattoon Daily Journal Gazette*. In fact, there is a curious detail here, glossed over by Johnson; the story appeared on the front page, in a column headed "Mrs. A and Daughter First Victims." How come? Only one incident was known when this was published, apparently considered by the paper and police as a serious attack, and yet we find this "first" as if the reporter knew there were more to come. Johnson dismisses this as an error, but such a contention does not resist analysis. Too many people see the headlines of a paper before it goes to the presses. Was the whole thing "organized" to bring national attention to Mattoon, otherwise a faceless community in Illinois?

Fortunately, Johnson provides us with detailed statistics of the coverage, in square inches of newspaper space, occupied by the series of events. Although the judging of the value or truthfulness of an issue by the press coverage in inches is a sometimes practice in the "soft" sciences, it only indicates the editorial bias of the media, of which we have a daily example in the morning news. And in this case, if there was foul play behind the scenes, the statistics of the

(continued on page 9)

ALASKA CLOSE ENCOUNTER

TYPE: CE-I
DATE: Oct. 27, 1982
TIME: Early evening after dark
DURATION: Approximately one hour
WITNESSES: 2
PLACE: Near Summit Lake, Alaska

by Richard Sigismond

The Ken Hamblin Show on radio station KOA in Denver is a popular, late night talk program. On the night of July 18, 1983, the topic of discussion was the UFO phenomenon, and Larry Sessions, director of the Gates Planetarium in the Denver Museum of Natural History, and I were the guests.

KOA has a powerful 50,000-watt nighttime signal which reaches over 30 states. This wide broadcast coverage made it possible for us to learn of the remarkable CE-I case presented here. Although our three-hour program elicited calls from listeners over more than half the United States, it was a call I received at my office the following afternoon that proved the most interesting and forms the basis of this report.

The call was from one Tom McCrorey, owner of a trucking business based in Meridian, Idaho. McCrorey said he had been pulling his 18-wheel refrigerated tractor-trailer down from the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, through the northern panhandle region of Idaho, when he heard our show. He proceeded to relate details of a close encounter his wife, Bonnie, and her father, Maurice Smith, had had in October, 1982, while they were driving to Anchorage, Alaska, to visit relatives. They had seen a huge metallic sphere, estimated to be 100 feet in diameter, with striking surface features which made the object look like a cross between a golf ball and a geodesic dome.

The object was at tree-top level and no more than 100 yards away from the witnesses. Moreover, it was, for all but a few minutes at the end of the sighting, stationary, dominating the night landscape for about one hour before it dramatically changed color from silver to yellow to orange, then to a bloody red orange. Finally, silently and slowly, the huge object drifted off into the night sky.

My caller said the pickup truck in which his wife and her father were traveling had stalled just after dusk with a frozen gas line, on a road near Summit Lake in Alaska. Failing after numerous attempts to get the vehicle started, they were forced to remain with the truck for several hours on a very cold night. (I subsequently learned that the father, Mr. Smith, suffered a severe case of frostbite as a result.) In effect, they were captive witnesses.

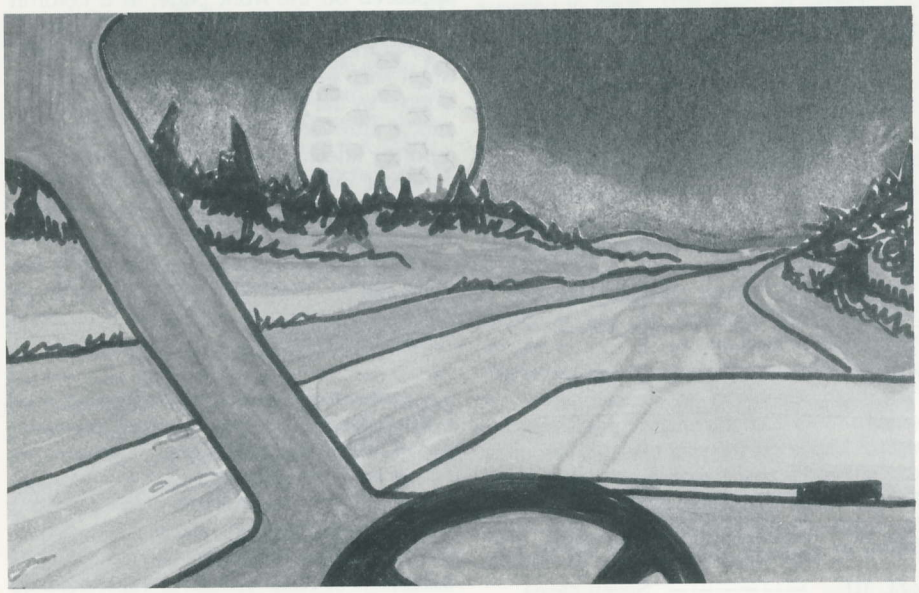
At first, they assumed the object was some sort of giant construction, possibly related to the nearby Alaska oil pipeline. They thought that the giant sphere, perched at the tree-top level, had some sort of underpinning, perhaps a pylon obscured by the trees and the darkness. They got this idea because at some point earlier in the day they had observed a roughly similar, albeit smaller, construction sitting on a pedestal.

I asked my caller if I could talk directly with his wife about the incident. McCrorey said he would encourage her to call back but he warned that she might be reluctant to do so because the experience had terrified her.

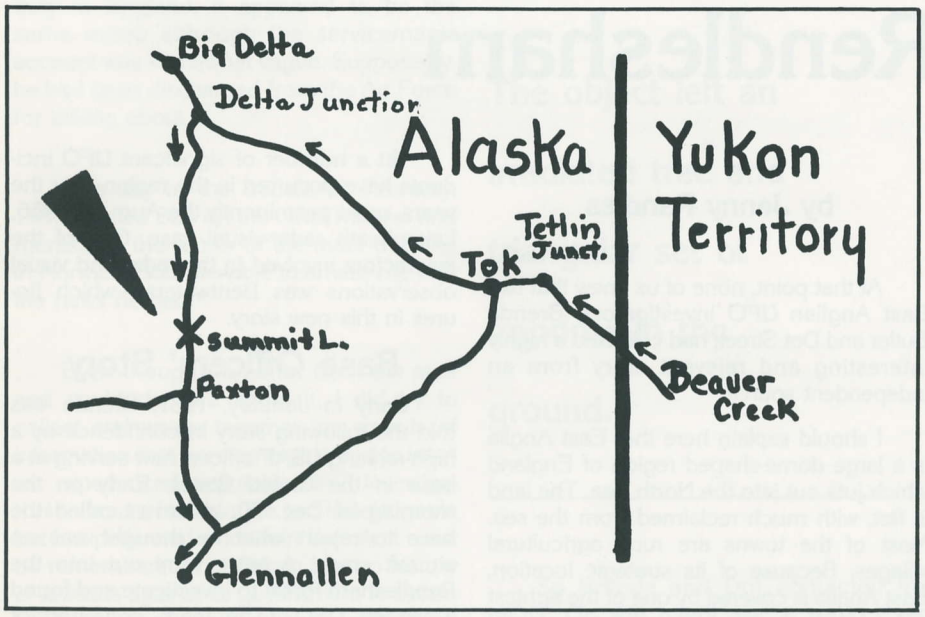
McCrorey's prediction proved correct. Bonnie did not call back that day or for several weeks. Finally I contacted Tom and asked him to try again to get his wife either to call me or to agree to take a call from me. He said he would try but that she still was hesitant to speak about her experience.

In late June, 1984, I had yet to hear from the McCroreys. Then I happened to read Larry Fawcett and Barry Greenwood's *Clear Intent* and on page 50 came across a reprint of a NORAD document, a portion of which immediately commanded my attention. The document, a message sent by the Commander-in-Chief of NORAD to NORAD units in North America on November 11, 1975, concerns the by-now well-publicized "visits" by UFOs to certain Strategic Air Command bases. The document mentions that when personnel at Falconbridge AFB in Ontario viewed the object through binoculars, they found it was a sphere about 100 feet in diameter and had craterlike indentations on the surface. In other words, they saw something strikingly similar to what Bonnie McCrorey and Maurice Smith had observed.

Soon afterwards I called Meridian, Idaho, to see if Bonnie and her father had yet agreed to communicate the details of their experience. Tom, who took the call,



This drawing depicts the object seen by Bonnie McCrorey and her father, Maurice Smith, while driving to Anchorage, Alaska, in October, 1982.



said his wife had recently expressed a willingness to talk with me about her UFO experience. Unfortunately, she was out when I called. I phoned again later in the week and at last established contact. I learned new details of the event and, in addition, Bonnie promised to write me a letter giving her recollections. She did this on Aug. 27. Some of what she wrote follows:

"On October 20, 1982, my father, Maurice Smith, and I left Meridian, Idaho, headed north for Anchorage, Alaska. On the 7th day we went into Alaska and when we came to the Tok Junction, instead of turning southwest we went northwest and ended up getting lost. My dad referred to this later as the Alaskan Triangle.

"It was getting late afternoon when we stopped for gas at a lodge near Summit Lake. We had coffee and visited with the people that ran the lodge.

"Just before dark it started getting extremely cold and the pickup stopped right in the road with a frozen gas line. We thought for sure someone would stop to help us, but nobody did. After we had been there about 20 minutes, we noticed a huge ball up on a ridge to our left. We figured it was about 100 feet in diameter. It was silver colored and appeared to be a geodesic dome. We joked about it being Paul Bunyan's golf ball. We had seen a similar dome in a valley earlier in the day.

"Within the next hour it changed color from silver to yellow to orange to bright orange to a fiery red-orange, then slowly lifted off the ground and moved up the ridge northerly until it went out of sight. *It never made any sound whatsoever!* When it first took off we were only 100 yards from it.

"An hour or so later a policeman came along and got our pickup started.

"We flew back home and stopped off at Sitka to visit my older brother. While there we talked to the Pastor of a church. I believe his name is Bob Benton. When we described what we had seen, he said he and many others had seen these things while stationed there in the Air Force. Their superiors told them they didn't see anything and when one man took pictures they were taken away.

"When we returned home, my dad called my uncle, who is a retired Air Force Lt. Col. and he said he had seen these things while flying a jet fighter."

It is not every day that we ufologists come upon close-range sightings of giant 10-story-high spherical UFOs. But as a psychologist, I am instinctively drawn to Bonnie McCrorey's closing reflection: "When this, whatever it was, changed all colors and took off, it was the fact that there was no noise at all, *that* was the scary thing about it!" □

Mattoon Gasser

(continued from page 7)

column coverage seem to bear out this possibility. (Ed Note: social psychologists argue that the alarmist headline was a key factor in promoting mass hysteria.)

Thus, contrary to Johnson's assertion that there were two hypotheses to explain the facts, we have already three: 1) mass hysteria, triggered by a real or imaginary incident; 2) an organized newspaper build-up, as a prank or for more serious unknown reasons; and 3) a real "anesthetist."

Before discussing those possibilities in some depth, let's take a moment to examine, as Johnson does, the nature of the reported gas used by the attacker. Johnson says that it did not affect others in the room, a patent falsehood when one considers Mrs. A's case. He also says that one of the effects reported, vomiting, was independently verified, but dismisses this as a symptom of hysteria, as is the excited condition observed in the victims. Well, I wonder how one could expect the victims to be calm and collected after going through such an experience, and since the vomiting was a fact, as well as the independent testimony of husbands (or maybe husbands are not independent) that they had really smelled gas, it follows that at least the initial, and perhaps some of the other incidents, did indeed occur. At this distance in time, it is hard to make a guess as to the true nature of the gas, but from the details reported by Johnson, we can speculate that the "gasser" simply used natural gas, which he either carried or simply released from sources existing at the homes he visited.

Johnson also considers the victims as a group and marvels that there are few children in his sample, after he rejects some because of parental influence. The age of the victims peaks at the 20-29 age group, and all the cases seem to have occurred within a uniform socio-economic group.

Johnson concludes that "the hypothesis of hysteria fits all of the evidence, without remainder." This is only wishful thinking, because nothing is further from the truth if we are going to believe what Johnson himself has reported. The initial incidents have not been explained. The word "first" in the

(continued on page 14)

Mystery at Rendlesham

by Jenny Randles

In early February, 1981, I got a phone call from Paul Begg, a serious writer on paranormal subjects and author of *Into Thin Air,* a skeptical book which demystifies a number of classic "mysterious" disappearances.

At the time, Paul lived in East Anglia near the city of Norwich. He told me that when he and his wife were in a local pub they heard the following story from a civilian working as a radar operator in a small civilian/military radar system. The man was off duty at the time of the events, which apparently was why he was willing to venture this account by colleagues.

Radar Contact

As he told the story, early on the morning of Dec. 30, 1980 (or within a day of two of this date) their unit tracked an unidentified target heading south into the county of Suffolk. It was lost near Woodbridge, where there are two important military bases, run jointly by the Royal Air Force and the U.S. Air Force. The crew notified radar systems higher up the ladder. They would have forgotten the incident but for the fact that some USAF officers came a couple of days later to take away the radar trace recordings of that incident.

The radar staff was told that the object they tracked had come down in a woodland area called Rendlesham forest — about eight miles east of Ipswich, near the NATO bases, Woodbridge and Bentwaters. Supposedly, the object was seen as a material craft of unknown design and a team of high-ranking officers went out from one of the bases to intercept, but on close approach, both the engine and headlights of their jeep had failed. There was also talk of entities seen repairing the craft, which eventually took off. Before that happened, however, the officers had conversed with the entities.

This incredible tale struck me as little more than a third-hand anecdote. I passed it on to two investigators, Peter Warrington, a specialist in UFO-radar cases, and Kevin McClure, who is interested in rumors and their genesis. They interviewed Paul's informant. The radar unit itself denied any knowledge of this radar-tracking, and subsequently it proved impossible to verify the radar side of the story.

At that point, none of us knew that two East Anglian UFO investigators, Brenda Butler and Dot Street, had collected a highly interesting and relevant story from an independent source.

I should explain here that East Anglia is a large dome-shaped region of England which juts out into the North Sea. The land is flat, with much reclaimed from the sea. Most of the towns are rural agricultural villages. Because of its strategic location, East Anglia is covered by one of the tightest radar nets in the Western world, and several of the air bases (such as Woodbridge/Bentwaters) have both British and American base commanders.

Because of its relative isolation and low population density, East Anglia has rarely been well covered by UFO investigators. Brenda Butler, from Leiston, Suffolk, just a few miles from Bentwaters, has followed the subject as an independent researcher for many years. Dot Street got interested shortly before 1980, after a personal sighting and quickly became the regional investigator for the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA). Neither woman was well known in ufology or experienced in handling significant cases.

The disk-like craft stood on three legs, and a shaft of light shown from its underside.

Yet a number of significant UFO incidents have occurred in the region over the years, most prominently the Aug. 13, 1956, Lakenheath radar-visual case. One of the key factors involved in the radar and visual observations was Bentwaters — which figures in this new story.

Base Officers' Story

Early in January, 1981, Brenda was told the following story in confidence by a high-ranking USAF officer, now serving at a base in the United States. Early on the morning of Dec. 30, a farmer called the base to report what he thought was an aircraft crash. A team went out into the Rendlesham forest to investigate and found a landed UFO. (The team consisted of high-ranking officers from the base, including Brenda's friend, security officers and the base commander.) The disk-like object stood on three legs, and a shaft of light shone from its underside. Three entities, about three feet tall and in silver suits, were seen in the light beam. For some hours the base commander and the aliens conversed. Then the allegedly damaged UFO was repaired and took off.

The next day an A-10 aircraft overflew the forest and found radiation traces. The area was sealed off and inquirers (such as the farmer) were told an airplane had crashed, although no statement to this effect was made public.

Brenda continued to hear second-hand accounts which affirmed previous testimony, although other elements were added. These included severe animal disturbance in the vicinity, an alleged order "from the top" to the team confronting the UFO to leave their weapons behind, and the supposed existence of film of the events. Surprisingly, in none of these reports and in no other report was there reference to the interference to the jeep light and engine.

At last, Brenda informed Dot and suggested that the two of them commence a proper investigation. Dot notified her BUFORA coordinator for the county, Bob Easton, of what they were doing. Bob was intrigued because he had already heard, via Norman Oliver (then editor of the BUFORA journal), that American ufologist Lucius Farish had just picked up a story from a serviceman sent stateside after a tour of

duty in England. It appeared to be the same event, although the serviceman's account was somewhat vague. Supposedly, he had been discharged from the Air Force for talking about it.

One day in the middle of February, 1981, I called Bob on the other matters and mentioned the rumor of the radar tracking in Norwich. Bob was able to amaze me with the news he had.

Even though I lived far from the area and could do little about it, I did try to collect and weave together the strands of information that were emerging and to interest experienced, reputable UFO investigators to lend a hand to the two indefatigable but inexperienced women in Suffolk. It must be remembered that Britain has no history of lawsuits against its government to obtain UFO files or of public military projects like Blue Book. Although the Ministry of Defense (MOD) has conducted UFO investigations for many years, it keeps tight-lipped about the matter. Most British researchers discount crashed-UFO tales and are similarly skeptical of supposed government cover-ups. Consequently, the incident at Rendlesham (based as it was on a collection of anonymous stories) did not impress them, and they had no interest in involving themselves in what they perceived as a wild goose chase.

Meanwhile, Brenda and Dot refused to give up what often seemed a hopeless task. At times, their work was met with actual hostility. The two were quite aware of their limitations, but instead of help they were told the airmen involved were merely stringing them along with a good yarn.

Throughout 1981 and 1982, Brenda and Dot made little headway, although they collected many more anecdotes. Attempts to visit the site of the landing were met, at first, with failure. Then they were told that the forestry commission had burned it to the ground. As early as Feb. 18, 1981, they got an appointment to see the British squadron-leader in charge of the base. He did not deny that the events took place but told them he could not discuss the matter and they would have to contact the MOD (to which, he said, all the base's UFO reports were sent).

The object left an irradiated tree and triangular set of imprints in the ground.

So Brenda and Dot contacted the MOD. On the telephone a spokesman denied knowledge of the events. In a March 25, 1981, letter to Brenda, another one said, "I am afraid we are unable to help you in your quest"—only this and nothing more. (Ironically, the reference code on this letter was ET-1.)

Once the file on the incident became top-heavy with accounts (from eyewitnesses, second-hand informants at the base, civilian villagers who had seen things over the woods, and farmers who had suffered effects and visits of several kinds) the investigators directed their efforts toward obtaining official verification.

It was clear that *something* had happened, but we still did not know what. Were the stories of crashed UFOs to be believed? What about the supposed base commander-alien conversations? Could there actually have been an aircrash? We even speculated that a near-miss involving the nuclear weapons at the base might have been hidden by the UFO tale. But the real breakthrough was to come, not from Brenda and Dot, next door to the events, but thousands of miles away, in the United States.

Confirmation

American researchers Larry Fawcett and Berry Greenwood, at work on their *Clear Intent*, were approached by a witness, who claimed to have been present at the events in Rendlesham forest. He gave them (for publication in their book) a complete account, with sketches and photographs of himself at the site. His story largely tallied with the stories that had emerged in Britain, with one significant exception—he said nothing of contact with aliens or of the saucer's having been disabled, let alone having crashed.

This man (whom the investigators call Art Wallace) was a security officer on duty at RAF Bentwaters at the time. This has been verified. He told an extraordinary story, including the allegation that he had been rendered unconscious prior to the emergence of the aliens from the landed UFO. Using this as lever, the investigators obtained, in April, 1983, a statement from the USAF, that there "was allegedly some strange activity near RAF Bentwaters at the approximate time in question." And, at precisely the same time (letter dated April 13, 1983), I finally got MOD to admit in a written statement that "USAF personnel did see unusual lights...but no explanation for the occurrence was ever forthcoming." MOD added that it was not true, "as has been suggested," that the account concerned an air crash or was the cover for a nuclear accident or involved the "testing of secret devices." The elimination of these possibilities is almost tantamount to an official admission that a UFO was seen.

The MOD letter also asserted, as had Fawcett and Greenwood's informant, that the event did not involve "contact with alien beings." But the letter added a puzzling element—it cited the date as Dec. 27, 1980, whereas all other reports state Dec. 30.

Significantly, several of Brenda's and Dot's informants claimed unusual activity over the woods had been observed more than once in this space of several days. Brenda's primary witness, talking about the Dec. 30 incident, said it was not the first time such things had happened at the base.

Commander's Story

Then, in a dramatic development, Larry and Barry succeeded in obtaining, via the

(continued on page 15)

BOOK REVIEWS

MUTE EVIDENCE

Daniel Kagan and Ian Summers, Bantam Books, 1984, 504 pages, Paperback.

by Mark Chesney

Mute Evidence should be required reading not only for those who consider themselves to be serious students of whatever the UFO phenomenon is but also for those who just like an elegant example of first-rate investigative reporting.

In the 1970s, reports from western states indicated that cattle and other livestock were being killed and mutilated in some mysterious manner by parties unknown. On occasion, these "mutilations" were linked to the sightings of unusual lights. Before long, any number of ill-considered theories were being bandied about, incorporating CIA/Pentagon biological weapons testing, Satanism, weirdly silent black helicopters (shades of Airwolf!), big business mineral prospecting, and, of course, everyone's favorite suspect when anything out of the ordinary happens—extraterrestrials.

The mutilation mystery was adopted by a number of UFO enthusiasts who should have known better (though after reading *Mute Evidence* one suspects that they probably were incapable of knowing better) and became a ufological cause celebre, abetted by the media's sensationalistic treatment of the reports. Something similar happened in the 1960s when the media picked up on the Hill case, presenting it as fact based on careful investigation when in reality close examination of the case reveals many disconcerting inconsistencies. And indeed, authors Kagan and Summers found a stunning number of glaring inconsistencies when rather than blindly accept the pronouncements of a few self-styled experts, they decided to investigate the mutilation phenomenon themselves.

It is fascinating to observe the evolution of the authors' thinking as their investigation develops. Initially, the content of the reports, the sincerity of the people they met, and the ostensible credentials of the mutilation "experts" overwhelmed them. But when they checked out the claims of both the "experts" and the sensationalistic media, Kagan and Summers discovered that what was presented as the mutilation phenomenon and what was actually occurring were two entirely separate matters. One especially striking example is recounted in their scene-by-scene analysis of the most well-known mutilation documentary, which they expose (in devastating fashion) as misleading, manipulative propaganda.

In the final phases of their investigation, Kagan and Summers traveled to key mutilation areas and met with the major investigators. This part of the book is the most damning of the phenomenon and also, unfortunately, of the "mutologists." Kagan and Summers found that those pushing "mutology" were in fact a loose group of UFO buffs (some hiding in the UFO closet) who were using reports of dead cows to further in some vague way, public acceptance of UFOs. The authors' revelations cast grave doubt on any UFO-related research these individuals, some well-known in ufology, have done. Amazingly, most of the incriminating information Kagan and Summers uncovered was given to them by these same persons, who seemed sadly unaware of what they were revealing about themselves and their methods.

Kagan and Summers operate on the sensible principle that, if you are going to study dead cows, you should secure the services of an expert on dead cows, otherwise known as a veterinary pathologist. Earlier investigators used local veterinarians, who are trained to treat live animals, not to act (as they did) as coroners for dead ones. To the veterinary pathologist, the seemingly inexplicable conditons of the "mutilated" animals was simply a textbook example of the ways in which animals die in the wild.

So Kagan and Summers found that the vast majority of animal deaths were attributable to natural causes such as exposure, disease, ingestion of poisonous plants, and the like. And the rest of the mutilations? Apparently this very small group of animals were mutilated by some very human Satan worshippers. Bizarre, yes; extraterrestrial, no.

The authors conclude, finally, that the cattle mutilation phenomenon was not about dead cows but about the mythologized symbolic causes for the dead cows. In other words, some people found that they could use the unfortunate animals to buttress a psychological need to believe in powerful others (extraterrestrials), even though such connection exists only in the imagination, not is the real world.

Ed note: It is our firm editorial policy that a book reviewer writes on his own responsibility and "says it as he sees it." Some previous book reviews have brought criticism from readers and the above review may also bring forth its share. It is also our policy to publish brief comments from readers who may disagree, not only with book reviews but with other articles. We welcome letters to the editor.

Undoubtedly some readers will welcome Mr. Chesney's review of Mute Evidence on other than technical grounds. They may feel that the UFO phenomenon itself is thus absolved of any guilt by association in the matter. The "benign" concept of UFOs, held it seems by the majority of those concerned with the subject, suffers when it is suggested that there might be some link between UFOs and cattle mutilations. □

INVESTIGATION OVNI

Vincente-Juan Ballester-Olmos, Plaza y Janes, Barcelona, Spain, 1984, 297 pages

by Willy Smith

This is the third book by this veteran Spanish writer on the UFO phenomenon, who again has produced a serious work well worth reading (if your Spanish is adequate). It is not merely aimed at reviewing recent cases for the public, but concentrates on methodology, analyzing how the investigation of the UFO phenomenon is done in Spain. He points out the difficulties and pitfalls of investigation with the avowed purpose of improving the quality of the investigative process, as well as providing the fine points that will be of help to investigators, particularly those new in the field.

In the process, Ballester-Olmos relates several Spanish cases of recent vintage, all of which have been carefully studied and analyzed by him personally and/or by his associates. He also castigates those professional writers (whose living is supported by this topic) who don't hesitate to distort the subject, creating sensational events from little substantive evidence. He cites journalists like J. J. Benitez who discredit not only themselves as serious writers, but also degrade the subject in the mind of the intelligent public and the scientific community.

For the American ufologist able to read Spanish, this book not only offers a few Spanish sightings practically unknown in this country but demonstrates how well qualified and scientifically-oriented many Spanish investigators are. For all but one of the individual cases described in the book, the witnesses are poor in education and culture...farmers, laborers, and the like... due perhaps to the tendency of UFO events to occur in rural areas. Investigation of each case has been superbly done, with meticulous attention to details and a respect for the scientific method often lacking in English-speaking countries. Three of the cases have been marked for inclusion in UNICAT (the CUFOS catalogue of carefully selected cases now being compiled).

Several chapters are devoted to the discussion of the most common circumstances under which IFOs are mistaken for UFOs — the re-entry of satellites, incidents due to psychological problems of witnesses, the misinterpretation of photographs. One chapter is devoted entirely to ball lightning, summarizing information about it and specifying the parameters that one should normally expect to be associated with this phenomenon. Examples of cases reported as UFOs but now recognized as manifestations of ball lightning illustrate this chapter.

Another chapter is practically a manual on the proper way to conduct a scientific UFO investigation. The final chapter consists mainly of an evaluation of Ufology in Spain, and is, in our opinion, an accurate and realistic "estimate of the situation." It closes with a brief revue of the shortcomings of three popular explanations for the origin of UFO reports: the psychological hypothesis, the possibility of an unknown natural phenomenon, and the extra-terrestrial hypothesis.

A valuable review of UFO literature published in Spain between 1950 and 1980, compiled by Juan A. Fernandez, is included as an appendix. It is somewhat limited because it does not include the works of Latin-American ufologists, namely the significant contributions to the field by writers/investigators such as Banchs, Roncoroni, Robiou, Hourcade, and Uriondo.

The book suffers from a lack of an index, making it difficult to locate specific cases; as in this country, this is generally the fault of the publisher's attempt to cut costs. □

Close Encounter at Varzi — cont.

When we investigated the site five days later, no visible feature distinguished it from any other spot in the field.

There is a mysterious addendum to this report. Tornari told us that, two days after the landing, he saw a car with license plates from outside the province stop near his field while he was turning the already dry alfalfa. Two men, wearing white overalls, got out and proceeded to use some strange apparatus which they pointed at the spot where the object was said to have landed. As Tornari approached them, the men hastily departed. While this tale cannot be confirmed, there is no reason to doubt Mr. Tornari's sincerity or veracity (Ed note: shades of the men-in-black! Yet, as always, these stories can never be verified).

The aftermath of this sighting is similar to so many others. A local bee-keeper attempted to explain the sighting as a "voluminous swarm of bees which... alighted in the night...on the alfalfa of the farmer Tornari. In the morning, warmed by the sunbeams, the bees flew away with their typical buzzing." As usual, the skeptics never bother to examine the evidence.

On the other hand, the three witnesses (Mrs. Claretto did see the object briefly as it rose into the air, but since her account adds nothing to the essentials of the sighting, her report was omitted above) were struck by the beautiful sight the UFO presented, especially its "indescribable colors." Mr. Claretto said it was impossible to describe the orange color exactly, as it was a color "I had never seen before." This was true for all the colors, including that of the brownish vapor. Again, Mr. Claretto: "And the spectacle was just in this!... orange wasn't really orange, brown wasn't really brown, and so on."

The Clarettos stated that, prior to the incident, they didn't believe in flying saucers or UFOs, and "afterwards we don't 'believe' either...now we 'know' that they exist." Both husband and wife, like so many other witnesses before them, hope to see once again that "wonderful spectacle." □

Gasser— cont.

headlines of the *Mattoon Daily Journal Gazette* has not been explained, and, in fact, opens interesting possibilities. The independently witnessed symptoms, such as vomiting and a great degree of excitation, have not been fully explained. The lack of cases on Sept. 7 and Sept. 11 has not been explained, and neither has the graph shown in Johnson's paper, which apparently peaks on Sept. 7, a day when no cases were reported.

Let us go back to the three possible hypotheses and try to use Occam's principle. In my opinion, the hysteria hypothesis is contrived; it not only fails to satisfy the evidence but implies that people who didn't know each other came up with similar descriptions, as in the cases prior to Sept. 5. These witnesses were of the same socio-economic and educational level, perhaps living in the same neighborhood, all of which suggests an activity localized in a given area by unknown parties. Moreover, the victims were young females, all but one married, an indication of selectivity by the perpetrator, which would be very unlikely to occur with an imaginary gasser.

The second hypothesis is more tenable. That word "first" in the newspaper cannot be lightly dismissed; after all, the press controlled the publicity given to the affair and finally spiked it when it got out of hand. I think it is quite possible that the original cases (which could have a simple explanation, such as a gas leak) inspired a young reporter to make a name for himself (remember, we are in 1944 during the war years), but the prank got out of control. Perhaps the editor of the paper got wise after a while, but what could he do, except what he did? That is, move the tone toward the jocular and finally let it go by the board. There is another item of evidence supporting this hypothesis: the lack of motivation. Nothing was stolen, the circumstances did not offer gratification to a peeper, and even the victims had no reason to come forward with false claims.

The third hypothesis has its points as well. A party or parties unknown (always the copycat is a possibility) started to terrorize young women, perhaps as a prank, perhaps out of obscure sexual motives. Then the community overreacted and after a few days, with the state police in the act, the prankster decided to quit before being caught. End of the incident. To this day, he is (if alive) recalling with nostalgia these incidents, and maybe smiling secretly (if he reads the ufological press) every time he is mentioned in pro or con arguments on the existence of UFOs.

What is the bottom line? I would favor the third hypothesis, in a direct application of Occam's razor, because it is simple, possible and fits the evidence. The second hypothesis also has possibilities and I would not rule it out. It would be interesting to go back to Mattoon and dig in the morgue of the *Journal-Gazette* and try to obtain further information about the reporter(s) covering the case.

But one thing is certain, and it has been in Johnson's paper all these years for anyone to read; it was not a sequence of imaginary events triggered by another imaginary event, not even by a real one made public only after some of the crucial cases had already occurred. If mass hysteria means what I think it means, then the case of Mattoon is not an example of it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1]Ballester Olmos, V.J., "Tienen Relacion Los Avistamientos Ovnis Con La Poblacion?" *Stendek* 27: 31-39, March, 1977.

[2]Stewart, James R., "Cattle Mutilations: An Episode of Collective Delusion," *The Zetetic*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 55-66, 1977.

[3]Swords, Michael D., "Hysteria and UFOs: Is there a Connection?" *MUFON UFO Journal*, No. 196, July-August, 1984.

[4]Johnson, Donald M., "The 'Phantom Anesthetist' of Mattoon: A Field Study of Mass Hysteria," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 40, 175-186, 1945. □

More "Gassers"

by Jerome Clark

As one who has long been interested in the curious case of the "mad gasser of Mattoon," I find Willy Smith's paper a refreshing effort to cast a long, hard look at the standard cliches surrounding this episode.

In 1971, Loren Coleman and I went back to the original press accounts, especially those that appeared in the Mattoon and Decatur, Ill. papers. We even succeeded in interviewing several of the alleged anesthetist's victims. All stuck by their original stories and had no time for "hysteria" explanations, which they thought had been concocted by the authorities to escape blame after they failed to catch the prowler.

The hysteria explanation was proposed first, not by Donald M. Johnson, as Smith seems to be implying, but by Mattoon police chief E. C. Cole, who in a Sept. 12, 1944, press conference described the episode as "a mistake from beginning to end....Hysteria must be blamed for such seemingly accurate accounts of supposed victims." Before then, police and reporters recognized that hysteria played a role in the affair, but at the same time they assumed that there was a real stimulus — a lunatic with a spray can — behind the panic.

It was not just victims who were skeptical of the hysteria explanation. The *Decatur Review*, for example, objected, "There was no explanation of why several screens had been cut prior to reported gassings by several persons."

It is important, I think, to understand that the scare had turned into a severe political embarrassment for the city fathers. Victims told us that after they reported experiences to the police, investigating officers tried to persuade them to retract their stories. In effect, victims were being asked to answer for their own victimization.

Who was the "mad gasser?" Those who saw him usually described him as "tall, dressed in dark clothing and wearing a tight-fitting cap." One victim we interviewed claimed to have chased the anesthetist several blocks; he said the prowler was dressed in black and had dark features. In the last reported attack, on Sept. 13, 1944, (I note that Johnson has the last attack on the 12th, but he is mistaken), we are told, weirdly enough, that a "woman dressed in man's clothing" sprayed gas into a victim's bedroom. The next day the victim and her son supposedly found imprints of high-heeled shoes near the bedroom window.

Whoever the gasser was, he (or she) did not make his (or her) first appearance in Mattoon, Ill., in the late summer of 1944. The following Associated Press story was published in the *New York Times* on Jan. 22, 1934:

(continued on page 16)

Rendlesham — continued

Freedom of Information Act, the report written by Col. Charles Halt (dated Jan. 13, 1981; Halt was promoted to full colonel in the course of the saga) and sent to the British Defense Ministry by the then deputy American base Commander at Bentwaters.

The report describes a small triangular craft which landed in Rendlesham forest and was pursued by USAF base security patrolmen. In its wake the object left an irradiated tree and triangular set of imprints in the ground. The document verifies that two separate incidents took place, the primary one being on Dec. 27 and the second on the morning of Dec. 30. Except for the presence of aliens, it confirms the incredible nature of the events. Halt himself professes to have seen the craft on the second night.

The contents of this document have since been verified with its writer and with the British base commander, following direct confrontation between these men and Brenda, Dot and me. The details of what emerged are extraordinary. They leave virtually no doubt that a very strange close encounter between military personnel and some physical device occurred at the backdoor of one of Britain's strategic air bases.

The military authorities of both Britain and America seem to have had genuine and sincere reasons for withholding information on this case. At the very least it was politically expedient. But now that the information has leaked out, it is crucial that the truth be told to stop the spread of wild rumors. These authorities are rightly concerned about the damage unjustified speculation might cause. In particular, the allegation of a covered-up nuclear mishap (a suggestion I tentatively advanced at one point) seems to be regarded as more dangerous than public awareness that a genuine UFO event took place. The implications of that should be pondered. *(Ed Note: That attitude is not surprising, given the level of public concern regarding nuclear weapons and the safety of nuclear power.)*

But why were the stories about aliens and crashed saucers so widespread in the early days of the case? Why were these leaked to UFO investigators? The witness who spoke to Larry Fawcett and Barry Greenwood alleged that these tales were deliberately offered to ufologists because it was known that, as a rule, they don't believe in "crashed saucers." It was a clever double-bluff to make sure that no one in ufology or in the media mounted a proper investigation. If that is the case, it was a remarkably risky venture, but it certainly worked out as anticipated. For once we have an astonishing volume of testimony of a major contact between military authorities and, from all accounts, a controlled device, and the official stance clearly demonstrates that the events remain unexplained and were classed in government records as UFO encounters.

There have already been attempts to explain everything away. UFO debunkers have speculated that the landed UFO (chased through the woods and at one point almost *climbed upon* by one of the airmen) was a flashing lighthouse beacon five miles away! The triangular imprints and radiation were left, we are told, by rabbits! There are numerous flaws in this interpretation. The evidence in fact suggests that the object seen in the forest was something quite remarkable.

We hope that anyone who reads this article and who knows something about the case will write us, even if his or her information must be kept in confidence. Our investigation into the event, which still has loose ends, continues.

A full account of the Rendlesham case appears in the new book, SKYCRASH, (Neville Spearman, 1984) by Brenda Butler, Jenny Randles and Dot Street. □

SCHEDULE OF ASSOCIATES--Application Form

Associates	Annual Contribution (in US funds or equal) U.S. Mail	Foreign Surface	Foreign Airmail	Associate Benefits
First Kind	$20.00	$25.00	$30.00	IUR
Second Kind	$30.00	$35.00	$40.00	IUR & A/N
Third Kind	$60.00	$65.00	$70.00	IUR, A/N, JUS
Donor	$125.00	—	$125.00	Periodicals + 1 book
Patron	$250.00	—	$250.00	Periodicals + 2 books
Sponsor	$500.00	—	$500.00	Periodicals + 3 books
Major	$1,000.00	—	$1,000.00	Periodicals + 4 books

The CENTER FOR UFO STUDIES (IRS I.D. #23-7355392) is exempt from federal income tax as described in Section 501 (c)(3) and 170 (b)(1)(A)(vi) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

80% of the first $60.00 contributed is tax-deductible for federal income tax purposes. Any additional amount, less the value of publication benefits, is fully tax deductible.

Please mail your application and contribution to:
CENTER FOR UFO STUDIES
P.O. Box 1621-Lima, Ohio 45802 U.S.A.

Total amount enclosed: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION

Please register me as a CUFOS ASSOCIATE of the _____ Kind for 12 months. Enclosed is my annual gift of $_____ for the year of _____.
Print your name and address here:

_____
MY NAME, (MR., MRS., MISS, MS.)

_____
STREET ADDRESS

_____
CITY STATE/PROVINCE COUNTRY ZIP/POSTAL CODE

List gift associate and nominations below:

FOR _____
PRINT NAME OF AN INDIVIDUAL ONLY (MR., MRS., MISS, MS.)

_____
STREET ADDRESS

_____
CITY STATE/PROVINCE COUNTRY ZIP/POSTAL CODE

☐ Gift Associate Of _____ Kind with Extra Gift of $_____ enclosed.
Please send gift card signed: _____

☐ Nomination only. This is not a gift. Send information and an invitation to become an ASSOCIATE.

Gassers — cont.

"FINCASTLE, Va., Jan. 21 — Farmers' families of Botetourt County, terrified by a stealthy marauder who hurls gas into rooms, overcoming his victims or making them violently ill, are locking doors and windows securely these nights. Men keep shotguns ready to guard their homes.

"Rural sections have been terrorized for a month, but authorities, called out repeatedly in the dead of night after attacks, have obtained no more than shadowy clues as to the perpetrator.

"Once or twice victims have caught glimpses of a man fleeing in the night and twice an automobile has been seen speeding away from the scene but no one has been able to obtain a good description.

"Several times a woman's footprints have been found, leading to belief that the gas thrower may have a confederate.

"What motive is behind the attack none can say. Circumstances suggest to some investigators that the attacks are the work of a prankster and to others of a demented person.

"One doctor, who has treated several of the victims, is convinced that on one occasion, at least, deadly chlorine gas was used.

"Beginning on the night of Dec. 22, the attacks have continued at the rate of two or three a week, the most recent being in Carvin's Cove, near Hollins College, over the weekend.

"Officers think the marauder uses either a gas 'gun' or capsules.

"The last attack resulted in making a woman, Mrs. Campbell, wife of a former magistrate, ill. She was sitting beside a window and saw the curtains flutter. A second later she detected the odor of gas. Officers, quickly summoned, found no trace of the culprit.

"F. B. Duval, whose home near Bonsack was gassed Thursday night, caught only a fleeting glimpse of a man running to a nearby automobile, the motor of which was running. A woman's footprints were found where the car had been parked.

"All of the gassing has been confined to the southeastern corner of the county in the vicinities of the towns of Troutsville, Cloverdale, Daleville and Haymakertown."

It may or may not be relevant to mention that on Feb. 1, 1944, just a few months before the events at Mattoon, three persons living in a house in Coatesville, Pa., died after inhaling a mysterious "sweet-smelling gas," origin unknown. Neighbors fell ill and had to be hospitalized. In December, 1961, a "sickening sweet gas" disrupted a Christmas program at a Houston Baptist church, sending 100 persons reeling outside into the fresh air. Eight victims, mostly children, were sent to the hospital. Firemen could not find the source of the gas.

A busy fellow, our phantom anesthetist. □

Italy — cont.

(continued from page 3)

gist (Professor Bino Bini of the Imperial Meteorological Observatory), a chemist (Prof. Corrado Malanga of the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the University of Pisa), and a former Italian Air Force General and pilot (Salvatore Marcelletti, who spoke about his personal UFO encounter in the skies of Southern Italy) attended a UFO Congress and underlined by their very presence the importance of the study of the UFO phenomenon.

Following the Congress, a reorganization within CUN took place: Dr. Mario Cingolani of Rome, and well known in the Capital's political circles, is the new president, Mr. Antonio Chiumiento [Ed note: see his paper on page 4], one of Italy's most experienced field investigators, the new vice-president. Mr. Roberto Pinotti, the former CUN president, resigned that office in order to assume the posts of international secretary, CUN archivist, and, primarily, editor of CUN's official publication, NOTIZIARIO UFO (published in a new format by Pier Luigi Violin). CUN's archives will be transferred from Turin to Florence, and therefore all correspondence to CUN from abroad should be addressed to: Roberto Pinotti/CUN- Via Odorico Da Pordenone 36- 50127 Firenze (ITALY). Phone 055/367718.

Dr. Corrado Malanga, of the University of Pisa, will coordinate the scientific activities of the Center; the new national secretary for Italy and national coordinator is Giangranco Neri, P.O. Box 823, Bologna.

STOP!!!
CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL DATE

If the date shown on your label is 11/84, this is the anniversary of your last contribution to CUFOS and this is the last issue of IUR you will receive until your next contribution is received by CUFOS. Thank you very much for your continued support. Action now will continue your mailings uninterrupted.

INTERNATIONAL UFO REPORTER, NOV./DEC. 1984
ISSN. # 0730-174X

Center For UFO Studies
Associates Education & Business Office
P.O. Box 1621
Lima, Ohio 45802

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 187
Lima, Ohio

Address Correction Requested